

CARLOS BUTTERFIELD AND ASSOCIATES.

[To accompany Bill H. R. No. 810.]

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JUNE 4, 1860.

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Mr. GREEN ADAMS, from the Committee on the Post Office and Post Roads, made the following

REPORT.

*The Committee on the Post Office and Post Roads, to whom was referred the petition of Carlos Butterfield and his associates, proposing the establishment of a line of mail steamers from New Orleans or Mobile to sundry ports on the Gulf of Mexico, have had the same under consideration, and respectfully report:*

That, in the opinion of your committee, postal communication with these several ports on the Gulf of Mexico, by the establishment of a line of mail steamers, such as proposed by the petitioners, with the encouragement of a fair compensation for mail service jointly with Mexico, will furnish to our own citizens, as well as to those of Mexico, such facilities of communication between the two countries as their necessities require and the progress of the age demand.

Our postal communication with all the ports of Mexico is chiefly obtained at present through foreign channels and by foreign means. Thus is our commercial intercourse with Mexico, to a great extent, made subsidiary to, and dependent upon, facilities furnished by other countries, to their immense advantage but our great detriment.

While your committee believe that no postal arrangement should be made with exclusive reference to commercial advantages, it may, nevertheless, be proper to consider, as an argument in its favor, the eminent service which will be rendered our commerce incident to the establishment of such a line of mail steamers, in connexion with the fact that a considerable portion of the cost to the government will be returned to the treasury in the shape of postages. The duties also which will probably arise upon increased imports in a short time will, without doubt, more than balance any deficiency in postal receipts.

Mexico, with a full appreciation of the immense advantages which will accrue to her government and citizens, has, with a liberality worthy of imitation by our government, granted to a citizen of the

United States, as an inducement to establish a line of mail steamers to traverse the Gulf and touch at the several points named in the bill herewith reported, a subsidy of one hundred and twenty thousand dollars per annum for ten years. She very properly expects the co-operation of the United States in forwarding jointly with her this great enterprise.

The establishment of such ample postal facilities with eight Mexican and four American ports upon the Gulf cannot but increase our postal, commercial, and social intercourse, not only with those ports, all of which are important, but also with the contiguous countries, which in the end must result in promoting the interests of our commerce, our manufactures, and agriculture, to an almost incalculable extent. It will do what no other measure can accomplish, and that, too, at a very trifling expense. It is obvious that if there had existed in the past such postal arrangements as are now proposed, our political relations would have been very different with that country from what they have been or now are, and would have been undoubtedly of great reciprocal advantage.

If our postal communication with Mexico had been direct and frequent, many millions of dollars would have been saved to our government; our commerce with that country would have been preserved and extended, instead of being diminished, or, in fact, it would be more proper to say, comparatively annihilated.

Formerly our commerce with Mexico was over three times the amount it is now; and Great Britain, with a wisdom and foresight to discover and avail herself of every advantage thrown in her way, by adopting a more liberal policy than ourselves in establishing and encouraging mail communication by ocean steamers with government subsidies, has largely increased her trade and commerce in all those directions, while ours has been, on the contrary, constantly diminishing. In fact, England has monopolized almost the whole of the foreign trade of Mexico and Spanish America, her trade with those countries exceeding that of all other nations combined.

When we consider the rapid growth of our own country in wealth and population, our proximity to Mexico, and the abundant reasons for an extensive commerce with that nation, your committee cannot believe that it will be satisfactory to the American people to see any foreign power monopolize, to our national disadvantage, so large a portion of the trade and commerce, which properly and legitimately belong to ourselves, merely because we will not furnish the postal facilities necessary to its proper conduct and preservation.

If, in this connexion, we permit ourselves to view the natural capabilities and resources of Mexico, we shall find that in no country has Providence done so much and man so little to cover the land with prosperity as in that republic.

With this country we have now no postal arrangement whatever. When the necessities of our government have required speedy communication either to carry a minister or send a despatch, special means of communication have been adopted at a cost much greater than that which this bill calls for.

Viewed, then, either in the light of a postal arrangement, a promoter of commerce, or a political necessity, the design of the memorialist commends itself most strongly to the favor of Congress.

Your committee, therefore, for these and many other less important reasons too numerous to mention in a report, recommend the passage of the accompanying bill.

